

REMARKS

This paper replaces the response to the Official Action dated **October 5, 2004**, filed by Applicants on January 4, 2005. Applicants reproduce in this response the remarks made in the response sent on January 4, 2005 for the Examiner's convenience. In this response, Applicants cancel claims 11-30 that were introduced in the January 4, 2004 response, and instead introduce a new set of claims 31-50. This new set of claims more clearly recites the taught subject matter in the Application.

In the Official Action, dated October 5, 2004, claims 1-10 were pending. Claims 1-10 were rejected. Claims 1-2 were rejected as allegedly being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2. Claims 1-4 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,119,096 (Mann et al.). Claims 5 and 8 were rejected as allegedly obvious over Mann et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,142,469 (Weisenborn). Claims 6-7 were rejected as allegedly obvious over Mann et al. in view of Weisenborn and further in view of the Official Notice. Finally, claim 10 were rejected as allegedly obvious over Mann et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,246,975 (Rivonelli et al.).

As mentioned above, claims 11-30 introduced in the last response have been canceled in this response. Applicants take this opportunity to distinguish Mann et al. from the newly recited claims 31-50.

Initially, Applicants appreciate the extraordinary time and effort the Examiner has spent into drafting the October 5, 2004 Office Action. To assist the Examiner in bringing the newly introduced claims 31-50 to issuance, Applicants make the following remarks.

Newly Introduced Claims 31-50

Applicants have introduced new claims 31-50. Claim 31, for example, reads as follows:

A system for expediting security checking, comprising:
an interface allowing an individual to order a security clearance, wherein ordering the security clearance results in at least a verification of the individual's identity; and
a check-point to which the verification is routed, wherein the verification occurs before the arrival of the individual at the check-point.

As is clearly recited in claim 31, “the verification occurs before the arrival of the individual at the check-point.” The Specification explains in detail how identity verification can occur before arrival at a check-point, specifically, a check-in location:

Once the order number is entered by the customer, system verifies the customer’s identity via customer telephone interface 40 ... Once [the] customer telephone interface 40 verifies the customer’s identity, confirmation of the verification is routed through modules 50 and 100 for receipt at the computer(s) at the customer’s check-in location. When the customer arrives [some time later] at the check-in location, the security agent will [already] have on his computer confirmation of the earlier ID verification ...

(Specification, p. 54, ll. 7-20). In one instance, an individual can call in 30 minutes to one hour before check-in in order to verify his identity. (Specification, p. 55, ll. 11-12).

Moreover, the Specification also explains why such identity verification before check-in is desirable and advantageous:

This procedure, due to the security afforded by the call-in ID verification, serves to minimize the ID verification that is required to be conducted by the agent at the check-in counter. Because of this, special expedited passage check-in counters may be provided....

(Specification, p. 55, ll. 3-7) (emphasis added). Thus, verifying identity before check-in saves the individual time and obviates the need to go through a laborious identification process. In the instance described above, because a call-in ID verification affords superior security, part of the security determination is made before the individual even gets to the check-in.

Conversely, references such as Mann et al. disclose general check-in systems. In Mann et al., “on arrival at the airport, the passenger is identified using iris recognition system and automatically checked in for the flight...” (Abstract). Thus, in Mann et al., the identification process of the passenger begins at the check-in stage, and not before the check-in stage—as recited in claim 31. Therefore, Mann et al. requires a passenger to go through a potentially laborious identification process if the scanning of the iris process 308 cannot make a match in the database 310. See Figure 3.

In short, claim 31 recites the following limitation missing from Mann et al.: “a check-point to which the verification is routed, wherein the verification occurs before the arrival of the individual at the check-point.” Similarly, independent claims 42 and 50 include

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recitations which are missing from Mann et al.: “receiving the verification at a check-point, wherein the verification occurs before the arrival of the individual at the check-point...” (claim 42); and “providing that verification to a check-in location, wherein the verification is performed before the arrival of the individual at the check-in location...” (claim 50).

Claims 32-41 and 43-49 depend either directly or indirectly from claims 31 and 42, and are believed allowable for the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 31-50 patentably define over Mann et al. alone or in combination with any other cited references. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowability of the newly introduced claims is thus earnestly solicited.

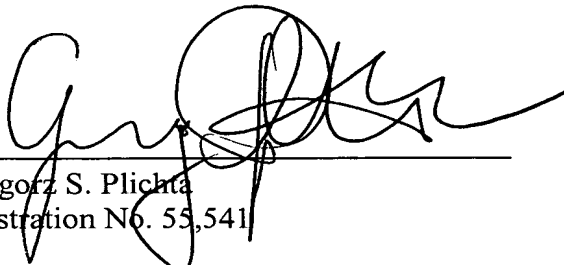
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CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Office Action, and submit that Claims 31-50 of the Application are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and passage to issue of the application at the Examiner's earliest convenience is earnestly solicited.

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